

The background of the cover is a photograph of a misting fountain with a network diagram overlaid. The diagram consists of a central yellow circle connected to six other yellow circles by white lines, forming a star-like pattern. The fountain's water is misty and the background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

Mayors' Institute on City Design

Winter 2002 Newsletter

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Maya Lin Designs Public Space for Downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan

Grand Rapids 

Mayor John Logie attended the thirteenth session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) in the fall of 1992. At that meeting, he presented the dual challenge of spurring significant investment downtown without

overwhelming the existing social and physical character. The resulting project design is an engaging place that adds immeasurably to the quality of life downtown.



Mayor John Logie



Above: Aerial view of Maya Lin's *Ecliptic*

Inset: Reflecting pool and misting fountain

PHOTO WILLIAM J. HEBERT



In 1991, Grand Rapids' mayoral candidate John Logie counted 27 empty storefronts along the downtown Monroe Pedestrian Mall. The mall had been created in the late 1970's to compete with suburban shopping malls, but by the 1990's, that effort had obviously failed. Tourist and entertainment venues nearby were lacking as well, contributing to lagging retail sales. Downtown Grand Rapids was not a vibrant destination.

Following his election, Mayor Logie began to consider strategies for redeveloping downtown. Having served as a member of the Grand Rapids Historical Commission since 1984, Logie was interested in revitalizing the historic Heartside Neighborhood, adjacent to the pedestrian mall on the south side of downtown Grand Rapids. Responsible and careful investment by outside interests and developers was critical. Investment ideas included a sports arena and expanded convention center.

Mayor Logie attended the thirteenth session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) in the fall of 1992. At that meeting, he presented the dual challenge of spurring significant investment downtown without overwhelming the existing social and physical character. Suggestions from the MICD participants focused on the need to coordinate small changes to support and complement any larger investments.

One of those suggested small changes was to re-open the pedestrian mall to limited vehicular traffic, connecting the area to the rest of the downtown. Residents and business owners supported this change as a way of increasing circulation through the area. Additionally, the City had already decided to renovate a public park at the terminus of the mall. The park had been created in 1983, but its south side, which faced the Heartside neighborhood, had been walled off, until the portion adjacent to the neighborhood could be completed at a later date. As of 1992, the south side had yet to be completed.

In 1995, the Frey Foundation, a private Grand Rapids foundation, commissioned artist/architect Maya Lin to design a significant sculpture for Grand Rapids. The Frey Foundation suggested to the City that perhaps this new sculpture could be located within the newly renovated park. Maya Lin is a landscape artist with a background in architecture. Her vision was not to do an isolated sculpture within the park at all, but to produce a more comprehensive design that would make the park itself a sculpture within the

city. "She was interested in the whole area," explained Joyce Bobolts, Director of Finance and Administration for the Frey Foundation. Once the Mayor agreed that Lin could design the entire park, the City expanded the project further to include two blocks of the adjacent pedestrian mall. The idea was to integrate the park with the life of the downtown.

The final design is now centered on an amphitheater for community festivals and gatherings, which can be transformed into its historic use as an ice skating rink in the winter months. Embedded in the ice are 166 fiber-optic lights that shine up through the ice at night and are arranged to resemble the stars over Michigan at midnight on January 1, 2000. This amphitheater-skating rink is surrounded by sculpted grass mounds inspired by the rapids of the Grand River, for which the City is named. Wide sidewalks, paving patterns and tree planting consistent with the park's design extend across and down the former Monroe Pedestrian Mall. A reflecting pool and misting fountain mark the park's main entrance.

The Grand Rapids Griffins, the local hockey team, donated 500 pairs of skates so the City could provide free skate rental. More than a dozen children on skates assisted in the ribbon cutting ceremony and were the first to skate on the ice when it opened in December 2000. The entire park was officially opened in September 2001.

Bobolts believes that the project has been a significant success. "The park is beyond what anyone had ever imagined. It is an urban park where locals eat lunch, relax, ice skate and sit under mature trees." Over 23,000 people used the park in its first season of operation (December 2000–March 2001), including over 17,000 skaters.

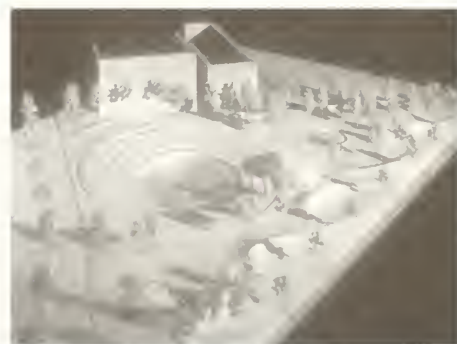
About \$5.8 million in public money was spent on the park. At least \$3 million in additional support was committed by the Frey Foundation to underwrite the cost of the design, contribute to the capital costs of the construction, and to create a set-aside fund for the park's maintenance. Rather than simply supporting an existing public project, the Frey Foundation identified a world-renowned artist and partnered with the City to bring together what were to be two independent projects. This unique partnership allowed for a comprehensive solution.

"Having a world-renowned sculptress' artwork in this city is going to add to the economic boom that we have been enjoying," said Mayor John

Logie. "Because of Maya's talent, the amphitheater will serve once again as an even larger gathering place for ethnic festivals, entertainment and skating."

The "economic boom" that Mayor Logie is referring to includes a 12,500-seat arena that was completed in the neighborhood a few years ago. Heartside residents are working at the arena as part of a preferred employment plan created specifically to counter the effects of expected gentrification. Additionally, six warehouses have been renovated and seventeen new restaurants have been added to the neighborhood, all involved in supporting small-scale social services for the residents. In three more years, a \$220 million convention center is scheduled to open, which will support additional investment.

The sculpture, the park, the pedestrian mall, arena, convention center and the entire downtown are designed in service to one goal: improving the quality of life in Grand Rapids. The integration of these small and large projects—including the donation of ice skates and the creation of a preferred-employment plan for residents—needs a strong vision, supported by public and private entities. By coordinating their efforts on the park and the pedestrian mall, Mayor Logie, the City of Grand Rapids and the Frey Foundation have created a successful example of this integration. The result is an engaging place that adds immeasurably to the quality of life downtown. ☺



Top: Maya Lin *Ecliptic*, 2001 (model)

PHOTO: JOCK POTTLE, ESTC

Bottom: *Ecliptic* in use for musical performance

PHOTO: WILLIAM J. HEBERT

Best Practices: “Green” Building Guidelines in Battery Park City

The Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), created by the New York State Legislature in 1968 to oversee the development of the site, has developed “green” construction guidelines to foster energy-efficiency. The guidelines

are intended to lead to the creation of environmentally responsible residential buildings that are appreciably ahead of current standards and practices for development.

Buildings in the United States consume nearly a third of our energy. Much of this energy use is wasteful, the result of design and development concepts that are not ecologically responsible. These concepts are often the result of economic formulae, which don’t incorporate initial costs that may produce long-term savings. However, Battery Park City in New York has a set of innovative development guidelines that encourage more responsible design and can be a model for development elsewhere.

Battery Park City, adjacent to the World Trade Center site, is a 92-acre mixed-use development. The Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), created by the New York State Legislature in 1968 to oversee the development of the site, has developed “green” construction guidelines to foster energy-efficiency. The guidelines are intended to create environmentally responsible residential buildings that are appreciably ahead of current standards and practices. Two “green” high-rise buildings were recently completed under these guidelines.

The guidelines incorporate seven main principles:

1. To encourage people to recycle by making participation in recycling programs easier, the guidelines require developers to build a separate Trash and Recycling units on each floor.

2. To conserve materials and resources by using recycled or salvaged construction materials, the guidelines also require contractors to recycle cardboard, metals, concrete, brick, asphalt, plastic, glass, and carpet.

3. To limit pollution and the use of non-renewable energy sources by encouraging the use of alternative transportation, the guidelines require that new buildings provide enclosed bicycle storage.

4. To eliminate the use of chlorine-based gases that contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer, the guidelines require developers to use air conditioning equipment that does not use insulation materials containing these gases.

5. To increase energy efficiency and reduce operating costs by eliminating inappropriate mechanical equipment, the guidelines require developers to install “right-size” equipment for each apartment, taking into account the size of the apartment, vertical elevation within the building and plan orientation. In addition, dimmable light switches, double-glazed windows, and alternative fuel sources must be utilized.

6. To improve water conservation and limit the strain on the city’s water system, the guidelines require that buildings be designed to collect 100% of all roof and setback rainwater for maintenance and landscape irrigation. In addition, systems and components must be built to reuse “greywater” from showers, sinks, laundry and dishwashing facilities.



River Terrace

LEE DUNNETT, AIA / CESAR PELLI & ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS

7. To minimize energy loss by reducing the amount of heat gain/loss through the roof, guidelines require all open roof areas to be planted with a “green” roof garden.

The biggest stumbling block to creating more “green” buildings has traditionally been the higher initial cost of additional features that contribute to environmental sustainability. For the buildings in Battery Park, New York’s Governor George E. Pataki, created the first ever “green” building tax credit. The legislation provides tax credits to building owners and tenants of eligible buildings and tenant spaces that meet certain “green” standards. The program applies to commercial and residential structures greater than 20,000 square feet placed in service in taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2001.

To qualify for the tax credit, new construction can use no more than 65% of the energy use currently allowed by code. Rehabilitation work must be below 75% of energy use currently allowed by code. An eligibility certificate from an architect or professional engineer licensed to practice in New York State is required each year to maintain the credit. The total aggregate credits that may be issued for each building is \$25 million. ✱

To learn more about the tax credit system or about Battery Park City, log onto <http://www.dec.state.ny.us> or <http://www.batteryparkcity.org>



News

College of Charleston names new Institute for Public Affairs and Policy Studies for Mayor Riley

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. (MICD 1 1986), co-founder of the Mayors' Institute on City Design and Mayor of Charleston, SC, has been honored by the College of Charleston. The Trustees of the College, in recognition of the Mayor's commitment to community values, spirit, and cohesiveness, have approved the naming of the Institute to the Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Institute for Urban Affairs and Policy Studies. The objective of the Institute is to establish an urban leadership and visionary focus that will help elected and appointed officials address a range of urban issues. ✧

The National Endowment for the Arts 2002 New Public Works Initiative

In August, the National Endowment for the Arts announced its 2002 New Public Works initiative, offering a total of \$1.25 million in funding for twenty national design competitions. The program, in its third year, is intended to bring institutions from across the country together with the best design talent to raise expectations and aspirations for public work and to increase popular awareness of the importance of design in daily life. Although proposals for all project types will be accepted, half the awards are earmarked for school design projects.

Projects should be of a scope and scale that are of national significance and that offer possible approaches for other American communities. To get a sense of recent project types, applicants should review the lists of New Public Works grants in the Design area of the Art Forms section on the Endowment's Web site at <http://arts.endow.gov>. If you have additional questions about the suitability of a particular project, please call Kristina Alg at (202) 682-5452. ✧

U.S. Conference of Mayors Announces 2001 City Livability Program Awards

The 2001 City Livability Program Award first round winners were announced at the Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors held in Detroit in July 2001. City Livability Awards recognize and honor mayors for exemplary leadership in developing and implementing programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities. The winning cities were determined by an independent panel of judges, selected by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Top honors went to Boston **Mayor Thomas Menino** and Natchez **Mayor F.L. Hank Smith** (MICD South 2000). Outstanding Achievement Award winners were Honolulu **Mayor Jeremy Harris** (MICD 22 1997), Irvington Mayor **Sara B. Bost**, (MICD 25 1999), Louisville **Mayor David L. Armstrong** (MICD South 1990), and Madison **Mayor Susan J.M. Bauman** (MICD 26 1999). Honorable Mention Citations were awarded to Burlington **Mayor Peter Clavelle** (MICD 7 1989), Chesapeake **Mayor William E. Ward** (MICD 14 1993), Long Beach **Mayor Beverly O'Neill** (MICD 20 1996) and Salt Lake City **Mayor Rocky Anderson** (MICD EPA 2000). ✧

Recent Events

Event

Resource Forum

Mayors and Design Issues

MIGD: 29

April 2001

Charlottesville, VA
University of Virginia

Craig Barton
architect, educator

Ray Gastil
urbanist

Maxine Griffith
planner

Laurie Hawkinson
architect, educator

Laurie Olin
landscape architect, educator

Margie Ruddick
landscape architect, educator

Susan Rodriguez
architect

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor (keynote)

Don Zuchelli
developer

James Brainard *Carmel, IN*

Carmel is currently developing a plan to build a downtown community gathering space in a city that has no real downtown to speak of. Would you recommend any changes to the current design to make it more efficient and pedestrian friendly?

Steve Burkholder *Lakewood, CO*

The focus for Lakewood is connecting the Villa Italia Quadrant to the Lakewood Commons Quadrant over a major highway. What is the best method to connect these spaces and create a pedestrian environment?

C.D. Cappuccilli *Monroe, MI*

The City is focusing attention on West Front Street and improving the banks of the River Raisin as a recreational and residential resource. Based upon present conditions, what can be done with the vacant parking area?

Alan Cohen *Ithaca, NY*

Ithaca is hoping to attract future downtown development following a two-decade hiatus. How should the area be designed so that development energy spreads out of the Commons towards the new library and creek?

Joseph Griffo *Rome, NY*

Rome wants to redevelop Festival Plaza to achieve the level or public activity expected in the master plan. How should the City proceed in working with the designer?

Keno Hawker *Mesa, AZ*

Mesa is trying to redefine the image of its downtown with the addition of a 130,000 square foot Aquatic Center. Which site should be chosen for this facility to best encourage pedestrian movement in the downtown?

Bernard Kinkaid *Birmingham, AL*

Birmingham is planning a linear park that will serve as an interpretive corridor for the history of the railroad industry in the City. What strategies would you suggest for interpreting the site's historical significance while still providing the open space desired by the City?

Bart Peterson *Indianapolis, IN*

The east-side of the City has been walled off from redevelopment by the Market Square Arena. After the arena is torn down, what are the best strategies of design and selecting a developer?

MIGD:
New Jersey

March 2001

Princeton, NJ
Princeton University
Regional Plan
Association (RPA)
New Jersey Office of
State Planning

Jonathan Barnett
architect, educator

Mario Gandelsonas
architect, educator

Frances Huppert
planner, architect

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Mayor (keynote)

Herb Simmens
urban planner

Jane Thompson
urbanist

Susana Torre
environmental architect

Jeffery Zupan
transportation planner

Robert L. Browser *East Orange, NJ*

There is a proposal to redevelop Upsala College Campus to an attractive residential neighborhood. Should this be a mixed-use community? How should it be integrated into the neighborhood?

Barbara Cannon *Town of Old Bridge, NJ*

The tremendous growth in the region in the last twenty years has caused great strain on the physical infrastructure and a train station is going to be built. What should the long-term expectations of the station be?

George Garrison *Commercial Township, NJ*

Commercial Township is hoping to redevelop the fishing village of Port Norris. What waterfront design elements will make this site attractive for developers?

Herman T. Costello *Burlington, NJ*

Burlington's redevelopment activities have been focused on revitalizing the historic district and Burlington Island. What steps should be taken to build community support?

Timothy McDonough *Hope Township, NJ*

Developers are interested in developing commercial, retail, and office space along Interstate 80/Route 521 Interchange. What type of development is appropriate for this space?

John T. O'Leary, Jr. *South Amboy, NJ*

A multi-modal transportation center is being planned along the waterfront. How can this be made compatible with other redevelopment activities in the region?

Robert L. Zelley *Greenwich Township, NJ*

Greenwich is the fastest growing municipality in the state of New Jersey. What design elements will assist Greenwich to manage its growth as well as maintain a village scale to the city?

MIGD:
Midwest

June 2001

Cincinnati, OH
University of
Cincinnati

Doug Kelbaugh
architect

Stan Allen
architect

Andrew Baque
urban designer

Jay Chatterjee
educator, planner

Cindy Holler
planner, redevelopment

Francis Russell
urban designer, architect

John Antaramian *Kenosha, WI*

The city of Kenosha would like to promote the remediation and redevelopment of some brownfield sites. What type of use is most suitable for these sites?

Jack Kellogg *Marion, OH*

Downtown Marion lacks retail, entertainment centers, and housing. The city would like to attract all of these uses but is unsure where to locate them. Where should these sites be located?

Gary Loster *Saginaw, MI*

The Riverfront Master plan proposes a new medical district that would ultimately join two separate hospital areas together with new housing and services. What is the best way to design the area between each hospital complex?

Russell Lloyd *Evansville, IN*

The city would like to address a number of issues that are creating a lack of vitality in the downtown core. How does one create more efficient entry points to the downtown?

Catherine Melchert *Bartlett, IL*

The Village Center of Bartlett would like to expand to include residential units and civic uses. What is the best way to redevelop the surrounding areas?

Debra Powell *East St. Louis, IL*

The Mayor of East St. Louis is leading a vision to remake the riverfront area. What is the best design approach for this redevelopment?

Announcements

The Bruner Foundation announced the **2001 Rudy Bruner Gold and Silver Medal** Winners. These Medals are awarded to foster a better understanding of the role of architecture in the urban environment, Silver Medal winners included the cities of Newark (**Mayor Sharpe James**, MICD 7 1989) and Denver (**Mayor Wellington Webb**, MICD 19 1995).

The **Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence** honored Denver (**Mayor Wellington Webb**, MICD 29 1995) with a special award for the economic success of Coors Field and the redevelopment in Denver's downtown associated with the stadium.

At its March meeting, the **National League of Cities** declared June 22, 2001 to be National Small Cities Investing in Communities Day. The day will focus on the importance of investing in small communities.

The winning projects in the **2001 Professional Awards of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)** demonstrate the exceptional influence landscape architects have on planning and design approaches. A **Design Honor Award** was given to the Waterfront Park in Louisville (**Mayor Dave Armstrong**, MICD 26 1999). The following projects all received **Merit Awards**: the Oklahoma City National Memorial (**Mayor Kirk Humphries**, MICD Schools 2000), the Anaheim and Disneyland Urban Design Plans (**Mayor Tom Daly**, MICD 18 1995), and Northside Park in Denver (**Mayor Wellington Webb**, MICD 19 1995).

June 21–23 in Atlanta, the **2001 All-America City Award Winners** and Finalists were announced. Bozeman, MT (**Mayor Steve Kirchhoff**, MICD 30 2001) and Santa Clara, CA (**Mayor Judy Nadler**, MICD West 1996) were cited as Award Winners. Finalists included Kansas City, MO (**Mayor Kay Barnes**, MICD 30 2001) and Tempe, AZ (**Mayor Neil Giuliano**, MICD West 1995). The Awards recognize cities for encouraging grassroots citizen participation and collaboration from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

The **2001 Waterfront Center Awards** recently cited the Richmond Canal Walk (**Mayor Timothy Kaine**, MICD 26 1999) for top honors, and the South Carolina Aquarium in Charleston (**Mayor Joseph Riley**, MICD 1 1986) for an **Artistic, Cultural and Educational Honor Award**. The mission of the Waterfront Center is to assist communities and the professions in the wisest and best use of waterfront resources for maximum long-term public benefit.

The **International Downtown Association Awards** were announced in October at their annual conference in Pittsburgh. Cities receiving awards included Greenville, SC (**Mayor Knox White**, MICD Northeast 1997) and Charlotte, NC (**Mayor Patrick McCrory**, MICD 21 1996) for Economic Development; Denver, CO (**Mayor Wellington Webb**, MICD 19 1995) for Planning; Fort Worth, TX (**Mayor Kenneth Barr**, MICD 24 1998) and Lexington, KY (**Mayor Pam Miller**, MICD 17 1994) for Events and Festivals; and Charlotte, NC (**Mayor Patrick McCrory**, MICD 21 1996) for Promotions and Communications.

Upcoming Events

MICD: West
Apr 4–6, 2002
Austin, TX

MICD: 31
Apr 10–12, 2002
Charleston, SC

MICD: Midwest
Jun 6–8, 2002
Ann Arbor, MI

Contact the Mayors' Institute for more information.

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Mayors

American
Architectural
Foundation



The Mayors' Institute on City Design is an initiative established by the National Endowment for the Arts and administered through a partnership with the United States of America's Cities. The Mayors' Institute is dedicated to improving the design and livability of America's Cities.

Newsletter

The
Mayors'
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